



# OREGON OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

May 19, 2021

## Wildfire Recovery Update

*The Oregon Office of Emergency Management, in coordination with state and federal partners, distributes this update of collated and verified information on Oregon's wildfire recovery efforts.*

### Innovative Housing Options for Survivors

Ensuring wildfire survivors have a safe and stable place to call home remains a priority for Oregon's wildfire recovery structure. The Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS) is working with wildfire survivors in shelters to help them move forward on their path to recovery, including locating more permanent housing.

Affordable housing was hard to find even before the wildfires, and the extensive devastation made finding a place to live much harder.

ODHS is working with public and private partners to find a solution for some survivors, helping to transition them to intermediate housing in former hotels recently converted into apartments. These transitional housing options offer a safe and stable home in a community setting with fellow survivors in their community.

The agency anticipates that as rooms at these locations are converted into apartments, the residents will begin paying what they can for housing. The prolonged strategy is to support each survivor's recovery efforts and their search for long-term housing. These efforts help survivors stay in their local community, provide for efficient recovery operations, and enable local businesses to prepare for and accommodate the tourism season.

### Drought Causes Concern for 2021 Wildfire Season

As Oregon continues to recover from the historic and destructive 2020 wildfire season, the state is experiencing abnormally dry conditions, causing concern for the 2021 wildfire season. Parts of the state have experienced record dryness the past two months, and May continues to be dry with warmer temperatures. Oregon is heading into summer with streamflow volume that is lower for most watersheds than levels from 2015 and 2016 – both years with exceptionally low streamflow.

Drought creates hardships that impact the environment, animals, farms, ranches and communities; it also creates additional fuel for wildfires, which ignite very easily under dry conditions and can spread quickly. It's crucial that communities develop drought response plans that include trigger levels and water use reduction measures. Learn more about water conservation tips at [www.ready.gov/drought](http://www.ready.gov/drought).

As is always the case with preparedness, don't wait for an emergency to occur before developing a plan. Stay up-to-date with drought conditions in Oregon: the U.S. Drought Monitor is updated each Thursday at [www.drought.gov/states/oregon](http://www.drought.gov/states/oregon).

### BY THE NUMBERS

Sheltered persons: **1,104**

Source: Oregon Department of Human Services

Individuals in Direct Housing: **292**

Source: FEMA Direct Temporary Housing Program

Hazardous trees removed: **36,815**

Source: Oregon Department of Transportation

Home Sites Cleared: **1,879** (65.5%  
of total home sites)

Source: Oregon Department of Transportation

Individual Assistance Registrants:  
**25,251**

Source: FEMA Direct Temporary Housing Program

**Amount Approved: \$36.8 million**

Source: Federal Emergency Management Agency

[wildfire.oregon.gov](http://wildfire.oregon.gov)

Media inquiries  
[fire.info@state.or.us](mailto:fire.info@state.or.us)  
503-378-7872

## Disturbing Cleanup Sites Delays Rebuilding

Oregon's cleanup and recovery process helps ensure the health and safety of people living, working, and recreating on public and private fire-impacted lands. By staying clear of debris cleanup areas, you can help your neighbors rebuild faster.

Ash and debris from wildfires contain concentrated amounts of heavy metals like arsenic, lead and mercury. These metals contaminate the soil beneath the ash and debris piles, causing long-term health, environmental and safety concerns.

To ensure contamination is completely removed and properties are safe for rebuilding, crews scrape three to six inches of soil from the ash and debris footprint and send samples to state-approved labs for analysis. If soil tests are positive for heavy metals or other contaminants, more soil has to be removed and the site has to be retested until it is confirmed clear.

Soil samples are tagged from specific locations on each property. If sample results from one portion of the lot come back positive, only that section needs to be re-scraped. If the property footprint has been disturbed, crews must restart the soil testing process.

Sampling soil for contaminants is a critical final step before cleanup is complete and rebuilding can begin. This intricate process is crucial to ensuring the health and safety of Oregonians and our natural resources.

Disturbing cleanup areas significantly slows down progress and delays rebuilding - be aware of your surroundings and take extra precautions to avoid impacting this important work.

Oregon continues to rise to meet the challenges. We are stronger together. For more information, visit [debriscleanupnews.com](http://debriscleanupnews.com).

## Help is Available for 2020 Wildfire Survivors!



### Lines for Life

Lines for Life, a FEMA-funded outreach programs, connects individuals with compassionate assistance and resources such as housing/shelter, food assistance, legal assistance, transportation, small business relief and more..

These services are free, confidential and have no eligibility criteria. To connect with Lines for Life call **971-420-1029** for English, **971-420-1018** for Spanish, or email [FEMAhelp@linesforlife.org](mailto:FEMAhelp@linesforlife.org)



### Safe + Strong

The Safe + Strong Helpline is available for children and adults who are struggling with stress, anxiety and other disaster-related depression-like symptoms.

Visit: [www.safestrongoregon.org](http://www.safestrongoregon.org) or call: **800-923-4357**



## INFORMATION RESOURCES

[Active Recovery Dashboard](#)

[Oregon Wildfire News](#)

[Emergency Management Websites by County](#)

[Oregon Insurance Commission](#)

NOTE: This publication is released every Wednesday.

Check [wildfire.oregon.gov](http://wildfire.oregon.gov) or visit our [Twitter](#) or [Facebook](#) pages for additional updates.

This publication is available in Spanish, Russian and Vietnamese on the [Oregon Wildfire Recovery Website: Oregon Wildfire Recovery - Media Resources](#). It is also available in large print, braille and additional formats. For assistance, call 971-719-1183 or email [language@state.or.us](mailto:language@state.or.us). We accept all relay calls, or you can dial 711.

[wildfire.oregon.gov](http://wildfire.oregon.gov)

Media inquiries  
[fire.info@state.or.us](mailto:fire.info@state.or.us)  
503-378-7872